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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 37th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. ZAHID (Vice-Chairman)	(Morocco)
later:	Mr. DINU (Chairman)	(Romania)
later:	Mr. ZAHID (Vice-Chairman)	(Morocco)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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Revised estimates under section 27: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Administrative and financial implications of decisions and recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission

Representation allowance for under-secretaries-general and assistant secretaries-general

AGENDA ITEM 108: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY COORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY*

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* Items considered together.

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AGENDA ITEM 109: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT*

AGENDA ITEM 111: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Revised estimates under section 24; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (A/47/7/Add.7; A/C.5/47/29)

In the absence of Mr. Dinu (Romania), Mr. Zahid (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/29) and the Advisory Committee's report (A/47/7/Add.7, paras. 2 to 5).

2. If there were no comments, he would take it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Assembly that it should endorse the Advisory Committee's recommendations contained in paragraph 5 of document A/47/7/Add.7. Therefore, should there be a need for additional expenditures in relation to the revised estimates proposed by the Secretary-General for section 24, such expenditures would be reflected in the final performance report under section 24 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

3. It was so decided.

Revised estimates under section 21 D; Crime prevention and criminal justice (A/47/7/Add.7; A/C.5/47/40)

4. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/40) and the Advisory Committee's report (A/47/7/Add.7, paras. 6 to 15).

5. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that it was his delegation's understanding that the staffing situation in the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch was currently under review; he asked what the status of the consultations was regarding a possible increase in the staffing of the Branch. His delegation attached great importance to the work of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice because there was an increasing need for institution-building assistance in European countries in the field of the prevention of crime and the strengthening of criminal justice.

6. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that, in paragraph 24 of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/47/40) and paragraph 14 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/47/7/Add.7), it was indicated that the question of travel of representatives of the regional commissions to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its second session would be absorbed from within sections 23 to 26 of the programme budget; he asked whether, in the case of the Economic Commission for Africa, those would be resources that had initially been earmarked for the social sector, and whether any activities would be curtailed.

7. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller) said, with regard to the status of the Secretariat's consultations on strengthening the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch, in addition to what was being proposed for 1993, that the Secretariat was reviewing the situation, including the total number of posts in the unit, and would reflect the result of those reviews, which would still be in the direction of reinforcement, in the proposals for the 1994-1995 programme budget. It had no reason to believe that the restructuring process would specifically affect that particular programme.

8. Turning to the question from the representative of Uganda, he noted that the United Nations adopted a programme budget with resources allocated to different subprogrammes for reasons of transparency, but that the transfer of resources within a section of the programme budget did not require authorization of the General Assembly or of the Advisory Committee; within the Secretariat the policy was that if resources which had been allocated to a subprogramme were insufficient and the justification was clear, resources could be transferred within a section.

9. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it should endorse the Secretary-General's suggestions regarding section 21 D (Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice) and the Advisory Committee's recommendations thereon.

10. It was so decided.

Revised estimates under section 27; Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) (A/47/7/Add.7; A/C.5/47/41)

11. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/41) and the Advisory Committee's report (A/47/7/Add.7).

12. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America), noting that it was indicated in both the reports that the budgetary appropriation for ESCWA would be maintained at the level approved in 1991 but that savings of some $5.6 million would be entered in the first performance report, asked whether the budgetary allocation would remain the same and the amount in question would be deducted from the total.

13. Mr. AHMED (Iraq) said that paragraph 5 of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/47/41) referred to lower operating costs at Amman, particularly with regard to salaries and common staff costs, generating savings in the order of $5.6 million. He did not see how those savings could be achieved. The premises occupied by ESCWA in Baghdad, which were worth $150 million, had been rented to ESCWA for a token amount of $1 per year, and the number of local staff had been substantially reduced before ESCWA moved to Amman.

14. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller) said that staff costs would be lower in Amman than they would have been in Baghdad because of inflation and currency fluctuations and because standard costs were lower. The savings would be

(Mr. Baudot)

reflected in the performance report but the money would be retained because the savings would be offset by other costs which were likely to modify the overall figure although it would remain within the budget appropriation of 1991.

15. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it should endorse the Secretary-General's suggestions on the revised estimates under section 27 (ESCWA) and the Advisory Committee's recommendation thereon.

16. It was so decided.

Administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations contained in the report of the International Civil Service Commission (A/47/7/Add.6 and 30; A/C.5/47/37)

17. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/47/37) and the Advisory Committee's report (A/47/7/Add.6, paras. 3 to 16).

18. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) assumed that the Committee was taking note of the reports and that the substantive issues would be taken up in the draft resolution on the report of ICSC. On the question of staff assessment, he noted in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/47/37) that the proposed increase in the current base/floor salary scale would cost just over $1 million but would produce an estimated increase of over $8 million in staff assessment. His delegation saw no logical explanation for that step since staff assessment was designed to cover possible tax increases resulting from salary increases. The written explanation provided on the subject in 1991 had been totally unsatisfactory and his delegation was not prepared to agree to the proposal until a meaningful written explanation was received. It was also disappointed that the question had not been raised in the Advisory Committee's report.

19. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that, in so far as ICSC's recommendations would bring salaries into line with the remuneration conditions of the comparator, his delegation would support them.

20. As to the conditions of service of under-secretaries-general and assistant secretaries-general, he noted that the Secretary-General, in his statement to the Committee, had indicated that he considered those levels to be political; if that was so, those posts were not international civil service posts and did not properly fall within the purview of ICSC. He therefore supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation in paragraph 12 that consideration of the issue should be deferred until the restructuring process had been completed. He asked when proposals were to be submitted with regard to the establishment of a D-3 level.

21. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) noted that the Advisory Committee was recommending a deferment of action on two proposals of the Secretary-General because of the ongoing restructuring process in the Secretariat. That logic might hold for the second proposal, but he saw no reason why it should apply to the ICSC proposal because ICSC was the custodian of the common system and the proposal covered not only the United Nations but also the specialized agencies. The Committee was therefore considering a specific level of increase in net remuneration on which there was political agreement already.

22. He inquired about the status of the D-3 proposal, and whether it was being considered in ICSC or the Advisory Committee.

23. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller) said that, in his statement to the Committee on item 112 (Personnel questions), the Secretary-General had indicated that there was a policy of differentiating between political and career appointments (A/C.5/47/SR.21, para. 45). He was in no position to provide further information but would make inquiries and inform the Committee as soon as possible.

24. Mr. DUVAL (Programme Planning and Budget Division), referring to the United States question on the financial implications of the ICSC recommendations regarding the base/floor salary, said that the increase in the base salary through the consolidation of classes of post adjustment did not have in itself financial implications for the regular budget other than staff assessment since consolidation was implemented without creating a gain or loss in net compensation to staff. The only costs resulting to the regular budget (other than staff assessment) were due to the fact that payments under the mobility and hardship scheme, as well as separation payments, were pegged on the base salary. There would thus be an increase by $1 million in common staff costs due to that factor, which affected a limited number of staff. So far as section 36 was concerned, however, since staff assessment was calculated on the basis of the base salary, it would show the full impact of the increase in base salary for the entire Professional level staff of the Organization, which explained the apparent disproportion between the two amounts.

25. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that, in the past, when there had been a consolidation of classes of post adjustment into base salary, that process had been carried out on an ad hoc basis so as to build up funds in the tax equalization fund. Since there was currently a surplus in that fund, there seemed to be no point in increasing the base salary.

26. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should take no action, at the current stage, and should revert to the question at the time when it had taken a decision on the resolution on the report of ICSC.

27. It was so decided.

Representation allowance for under-secretaries-general and assistant secretaries-general (A/47/7/Add.6 and A/C.5/47/39)

28. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that his delegation opposed the proposed increase, since it had not been determined by reference to the comparator civil service. He welcomed the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that action on the matter should be deferred.

29. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that consideration of the question should be deferred until the restructuring process had been completed.

30. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that restructuring was to be a continuous process spread over the next four years. He wondered whether that meant that the Committee would be postponing consideration of the matter indefinitely. He felt that it should be considered at the resumed session in the light of the Secretary-General's proposals for the second stage of restructuring.

31. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) agreed that restructuring was a continuing process and wondered when the Committee would return to the matter. If it continued to be postponed, conditions of service would erode. He also felt that the question should be linked to the possible creation of a D-3 level post.

32. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that the proposed changes still failed to make the individuals concerned accountable for hospitality and representation expenses. With regard to remarks concerning low levels of remuneration for under-secretaries-general and assistant secretaries-general, he pointed out that many cabinet officials in his own Government earned substantially less.

33. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) proposed that the Committee should include in its decision on the subject a provision to the effect that the individuals concerned must be fully accountable for all expenditure on hospitality and representation.

34. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) supported that proposal but felt that the amounts concerned should also be reimbursable. Her delegation was willing to approve an increase in the amounts of allowances, provided they were granted on a reimbursable basis and with full accountability.

35. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller) appealed to the Committee not to adopt such terms at the present time. To do so would mean treating representation allowances in the same way as hospitality and that might have far-reaching consequences. He agreed that it would be wise for the Committee to have a timetable for consideration of the question and that it could be discussed at the resumed session. He also added that the issue could be linked to the possible creation of a D-3 level post.

36. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that his Government was having to cut its contribution to the United Nations by 10 per cent, while the salaries of all government officials had been frozen in absolute terms for the next two years. In those circumstances, he could not approve unaccountable expenditure at the United Nations. Representation allowances were not part of a salary and full accountability was essential.

37. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) said that the aim of her delegation was not to cut its contribution but to assist the Secretariat in meeting its goals. She asked how the Secretariat could be sure that the allowances were being used for their intended purpose, namely to facilitate the conduct of official business outside official areas, unless the officials concerned were accountable and the funds themselves were reimbursable.

38. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) felt that a certain amount of flexibility was needed on the question of accountability and that the officials concerned should not be hampered in their work by excessive scrutiny of minor expenses. He favoured deferring a decision until the resumed session, when the matter could be discussed in the context of the Secretary-General's most recent proposals on restructuring.

39. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and agreed that a decision should not be taken yet but in the light of the ongoing restructuring process. He trusted that the Secretariat would prompt the Advisory Committee to deliver a substantive opinion on the matter in due course.

40. Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium) agreed with the Acting Controller that the Committee needed to give serious consideration to the possible consequences of the proposals put forward by the representatives of the United States and Canada. Perhaps the question could be taken up in informal consultations. For his part, he agreed with the proposal by the representative of Uganda that the matter should be deferred until the resumed session.

41. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that, although there appeared to be a consensus in favour of deferring the question, at the same time certain delegations were proposing new elements. It was therefore not entirely clear what matters were to be deferred. He proposed that the whole question should be deferred and reviewed in the context of the General Assembly's further discussions on the restructuring of the Secretariat at its current session.

42. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) said that the Committee should be careful not to overburden the proposed resumed session, which in his understanding was intended to deal solely with a number of revised estimates. The Secretariat might decide subsequently whether such a course was necessary and appropriate, but the Committee ought not to call for it prematurely.

43. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that his delegation wanted the Committee to agree in principle that the staff members receiving the

(Mr. Michalski, United States)

benefits should be held fully accountable and that the payments in question should be reimbursable, even if no action was to be taken on the level of payments at the current stage. He could agree that the matter should be taken up at the next resumed session, provided the Secretary-General put forward specific proposals to ensure full accountability.

44. Account should also be taken of the provisions of section V of resolution 45/241, which requested the International Civil Service Commission to reconsider the remuneration of the staff in question with reference to remuneration levels in the comparator civil service.

45. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) questioned the use of the term "resumed session", since the period in question would actually be part of the current session. Since the matter was closely related to the restructuring process, and as the revised estimates concerning the second stage of restructuring would be available in February 1993, the Committee should recommend that the question should be reconsidered in the context of the General Assembly's further discussion on restructuring of the Secretariat. The question of accountability could be discussed at the same time.

46. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that his delegation was prepared to agree to defer the issue of representation allowances on the understanding that the Committee would also consider the relationship of those allowances to the salary and benefits package allocated to senior officials, including the question of whether representation allowances should be accountable.

47. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should adopt the following decision:

> "The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly that consideration of the question of representation allowance for under-secretaries-general and assistant secretaries-general and hospitality for official functions be deferred and further reviewed, taking into account the views expressed by delegations during the consideration of this item at the forty-seventh session, as soon as possible in the light of future decisions on restructuring."

48. It was so decided.

49. Mr. NA CHAMPASSAK (Australia) pointed out that any decision on the subject of allowances at the assistant secretary-general and under-secretary-general levels taken in the context of the restructuring process would affect other parts of the common system, where no restructuring was under way.

50. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of Amercia) said, in explaination of his position after the decision, that, while his delegation did not think the issue merited consideration at the resumed session of the General Assembly, it

(Mr. Michalski, United States)

had gone along with the decision in the hope that other delegations would show the same flexibility in connection with other issues which the United States might wish to have discussed at the resumed session.

AGENDA ITEM 108: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY COORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS WITH THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (A/47/443, A/47/593 and Corr.1, A/47/776)

AGENDA ITEM 109: JOINT INSPECTION UNIT (A/47/16 Part I, A/47/34, A/47/119, A/47/276, A/47/373; A/46/34, A/46/219)

51. Ms. MILLS (Deputy Controller), speaking on agenda item 108, introduced on behalf of the Administrative Committee on Coordination two reports submitted to the Committee for information on the budgetary and financial situation of the organizations of the United Nations system. It would be recalled that in previous years such statistical information had been included in reports produced by the Advisory Committee. At the request of the Advisory Committee, that task had been taken over by the Administrative Committee. In view of the decision, taken by the Fifth Committee at its previous session, to biennialize its work programme, the first of those reports (A/47/593) had not been issued for the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly but was being submitted at the forty-seventh session. The second report (A/47/746) had been circulated to delegations that morning. The only action requested from the Committee was to express its views, if any, on how the data presented in the reports might be improved and whether any additonal areas of statistical information should be incorporated in future reports.

52. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on accounting standards (A/47/443), she recalled the terms of General Assembly decision 46/445 and stressed that the set of accounting standards being developed was intended to apply not only to the United Nations and its subsidiary programmes but also to the specialized agencies. For that reason, the task was not one that could be accomplished very rapidly. Referring to paragraph 7 of the report, she said that a third meeting of the Working Party on Accounting Standards had taken place, as scheduled, from 1 to 3 December 1992. The Secretary of the Panel of External Auditors had indicated to the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions that the Panel was very pleased to see the organizations moving so expeditiously to produce a draft which would provide a sound basis for fully developed United Nations system accounting standards. It was hoped that a set of standards would be ready in time for the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. The Committee was invited to take note of the plans for further action set out in the report.

53. Mr. Dinu (Romania) took the Chair.

54. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) asked why the request to the Secretary-General to appoint a consultant to propose a set of accounting standards, contained in General Assembly decision 46/445, had apparently not been implemented and why the report made no mention of the matter.

55. Ms. DAES (Vice-Chairman, Joint Inspection Unit), speaking on agenda item 109, introduced the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit to the forty-sixth and forty-seventh sessions of the General Assembly (A/46/34 and A/47/34) on behalf of the Chairman of the Unit. It would be noted that the current session coincided with the expiry of the terms of office of four Inspectors, and that five new Inspectors, appointed by the General Assembly in accordance with article 3 of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, would assume their duties on 1 January 1993. In addition to the reports, the Committee also had before it a document containing the work programme of the Unit for 1992 and the preliminary work programme for 1993-1994 (A/47/119). In accordance with article 9 of the statute of the Unit and in line with established practice, the work programme had been drawn up after consultations with participating organizations and other competent bodies, including the Advisory Committee, and reflected proposals made by several of them.

56. In response to the wish of the General Assembly as expressed in various resolutions, administrative, budgetary and management issues had continued to receive special attention. In that connection, she wished to mention that the Unit had made a substantial contribution to the introduction of technological innovations within the United Nations system, notably through its reports on the use of computers and optical disc technology. As the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management had informed the Committee at an earlier meeting, the optical disc project was being implemented by the United Nations Secretariat despite some earlier reservations.

57. After briefly reviewing the recently completed and current activities of the Unit, she said that at a time of growing demands and limited or dwindling resources, the United Nations could not afford to respond to global challenges by freely creating new institutions but had to use its energy on finding ways and means of making existing institutions work more efficiently. That did not only mean obtaining better results from work done under existing mandates but also meant having the professional strength, creativity, vision and resilience to take on additional and more complex responsibilities. The Unit was determined to make its future work even more relevant to the needs of Member States and its participating organizations, inter alia by improving the methodology employed in its reports and studies. In that connection, she drew attention to Part II, paragraphs 17 to 27, of the annual report of the Unit for 1990-1991 (A/46/34) and said that the Inspectors remained committed to an expanded dialogue and active consultations with competent bodies.

58. The Unit would intensify its efforts to work closely with the Board of Auditors and would welcome a closer operational relationship with the Advisory Committee. It was hoped that greater coordination and cooperation would not only help the Unit to contribute more effectively to the Organization's expanding responsibilities and operations but would also enhance the Unit's accountability to the Committee and the governing bodies of the participating organizations. However, revitalization of the Unit also required

(Ms. Daes)

strengthening of its secretariat resources. Over the years there had been very little, if any, improvement in the staff situation of the Unit. Compared with the increased workload and scope of activities, the Unit's secretariat size was relatively small. In that connection, she reiterated the proposals contained in Part I, paragraphs 12 to 15, of the annual report for 1990-1991 (A/46/34).

59. Recalling that the General Assembly at its previous session had decided to consider the desirability of biennializing the item under consideration as a measure designed to improve the work situation of the Fifth Committee, she pointed out that article 10 of its statute required the Unit to report to the General Assembly annually. Accordingly, the Unit would continue to do so, without prejudice to General Assembly resolution 46/220.

60. Pursuant to decision 46/446 requesting the Advisory Committee, acting within its mandate and with due respect to the statute of the JIU, to examine the functioning of the Unit with a view to enhancing its productivity and performance, and to report to the General Assembly at its current session, a joint Unit and Advisory Committee meeting had been held at Geneva from 8 to 11 June 1992. The discussion had covered a wide range of the Unit's activities under its statute and relevant General Assembly resolutions. The Inspectors had welcomed the meeting as a further opportunity for dialogue and consultations with related bodies throughout the United Nations system. The Unit was well aware of the increased cost-saving role it had to play as a service of the Member States in general and of the Fifth Committee in particular. Internal action being taken to revitalize the Unit's performance included a more long-term approach to the development of its work programmes.

61. In conclusion, she stressed the role of the Unit, a truly independent system-wide investigative, inspection and evaluation body, in a world system which demanded greater efficiency and transparency than ever before. The Unit stood ready to contribute more effectively to the process of making the United Nations system more responsive to the international community's needs.

62. Mr. MORCZYNSKI (Poland) said that Poland had always attached great importance to the work of the Joint Inspection Unit and was prepared to consider specific proposals relating to ways and means of strengthening it and improving its productivity and performance, thereby contributing to the implementation of a number of General Assembly resolutions on JIU, in particular decision 46/446, and to meeting the new and increased requirements and challenges.

63. JIU had an impressive record; a large number of the recommendations in JIU reports had resulted in substantial cost savings, as noted in paragraph 60 of its most recent report (A/47/34). His delegation welcomed JIU's project to analyse and quantify those savings. It was therefore convinced that the best course of action was to build on and utilize more extensively the accumulated experience and potential of JIU.

(Mr. Morczynski, Poland)

64. It was clear from the two JIU reports that JIU itself was profoundly aware of the need for self-improvement and adaptation to current needs, was willing to enhance its performance and had a realistic and comprehensive programme to achieve that objective. He hoped that the five new Inspectors appointed in 1992 would strengthen that ongoing process and that JIU would soon be able to report on some tangible results of the measures being taken.

65. The responsibilities and functions of the Inspectors were established in the statute. They had the broadest powers of investigation and provided an independent view aimed at improving management and achieving greater coordination between organizations of the United Nations system. JIU functions were both extensive and generally formulated. Such a formulation allowed flexibility, and at the same time called for more precision and specificity. JIU's existing internal guidelines and procedures for the conduct of inquiries and investigations were helpful in achieving that goal; however, more was needed to formalize the ways, means and operational tools of JIU, taking into account JIU's potential, the actual needs of Member States and secretariats, and the functions of existing bodies. The Committee for Programme and Coordination, in its report (A/47/16, Part I, para. 185), had drawn attention to the need to clarify the different concepts of evaluation, the monitoring of performance and inspection. Yet neither the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations nor the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation contained any mention of JIU's functions, responsibilities or prerogatives. In constrast, the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations dwelt in great detail on the auditing functions of the United Nations. Thus there was a clear need to concretize and formalize the relevant stipulations on the functions which JIU should perform. It would send a signal to all concerned, especially secretariat officials, that Member States insisted on the implementation of JIU's functions and would also help JIU focus and concentrate better on actual concerns of Member States and secretariats.

66. JIU's programme of work must reflect the major concerns of Member States and the needs of the secretariats of participating organizations. A more systematic analysis of the debates of the relevant bodies of such organizations, and of the Fifth Committee, plus more consultations, would help in identifying those concerns. His delegation also encouraged active participation of the Inspectors in the work of the Committee.

67. If the work programme of JIU was set in greater degree by Member States and the legislative bodies of the participating organizations, JIU would be able to function more expressly as a mechanism of intergovernmental control and supervision. To that effect, the General Assembly should submit requests to JIU for specific reports. In the past, acting on such requests, JIU had produced highly regarded reports on the use of experts and consultants and on overall office space allocation.

(Mr. Morczynski, Poland)

68. There should be greater cooperation of JIU with such bodies as the Advisory Committee and the Board of Auditors. His delegation welcomed the very constructive joint JIU/Advisory Committee meeting in June 1992. JIU should further investigate the administrative, budgetary and coordination issues identified by the Advisory Committee in its reports.

69. His delegation welcomed the changes introduced by JIU in the content and presentation of its reports, and encouraged it to make further efforts to shorten the reports and give more attention to the formulation of specific, action-oriented and implementable recommendations than to research aspects.

70. Mr. Zahid (Vice-Chairman) resumed the Chair.

71. Mr. STAVRINOS (Cyprus) said that his delegation had carefully studied both the previous and current reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/46/34 and A/47/37). The growing and more complex demands that were being made on the United Nations made the role of the Unit more significant than ever, and its studies and recommendations on administrative and managerial issues were an indispensable practical contribution to increasing the productivity of the United Nations system and to economizing its limited resources. The joint meetings and consultations of the Unit and its participating organizations and the inclusion of relevant conclusions for its work programme should be an example to other United Nations bodies in the effort to avoid duplication and overlapping.

72. A careful study of the two reports revealed a significant improvement, which was apparent in the working methods and systematic organization of the Unit and which had led to conciseness and accuracy in its recommendations. His delegation fully supported the recommendations made by the Unit in its reports and was convinced that their prompt implementation would benefit the difficult task of revitalizing the Organization. In particular, the Unit's studies on the control and limitation of documentation deserved full implementation in view of the financial difficulties facing the Organization.

73. Ms. RODSMOEN (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, welcomed the concise factual reports provided by the Administrative Committee on Coordination regarding the budgetary and financial situation of organizations of the United Nations system (A/47/593 and A/47/746). The growing dependence of the system on extrabudgetary resources, which far exceeded the regular budget, on such clear and thorough reporting and on summarizing the information available throughout the system made such a single concise document essential.

74. The Nordic countries believed that, in line with the biennial work programme of the Fifth Committee, the statistical report should be submitted every second year and should contain information on assessment rates, assessed and voluntary contributions and staffing levels for the whole United Nations system. The report could also provide less frequent information on specific

(Ms. Rodsmoen, Norway)

topics such as the size of the working capital funds of each programme, fund and agency and the rate of collection of assessed contributions.

75. She welcomed the updated statistical information provided by the most recent report of the Administrative Committee (A/47/746). As United Nations accounts were closed on 31 March of each year, it should be possible to summarize the figures for the previous year during the latter part of the General Assembly session, and such an updated report by the Administrative Committee could establish itself as the essential biennial report on the main figures of the United Nations system.

76. The Committee on Contributions included a separate addendum from time to time showing the size of cash payments received in respect of assessed and voluntary contributions. That very useful information could perhaps be provided every second year as an annex to the statistical report of the Administrative Committee rather than an addition to the reports of the Committee on Contributions. Lastly, it would be helpful for references to previous years' reports and to General Assembly decisions - unfortunately lacking in document A/47/593 - to be included in future reports.

77. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on accounting standards (A/47/443), the Nordic countries shared the concern expressed by the Canadian delegation over the apparent failure, counter to decision 46/445 taken the previous year, to appoint a consultant to propose a set of accounting standards for common application in the United Nations system. No explanation for that failure was given by the Secretary-General in the said report.

78. The Nordic countries welcomed the assurances given by the Deputy Controller that substantial results on common accounting standards could be expected at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

79. Mr. Dinu (Romania) resumed the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 111: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/47/11) (continued)

80. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, when agenda item 111 had last been discussed, the Committee had agreed to invite a member of the Secretariat to answer relevant questions. He had consulted various interested delegations before contacting the United Nations Legal Counsel, who had said that he would be prepared to entertain any questions from the Fifth Committee. Given his official capacity, his replies would have the character of legal opinion; that being so, in accordance with the procedure followed by the Office of Legal Affairs a formal request for replies to questions of a legal nature would have to be addressed by the Fifth Committee. It had been the Chairman's understanding that, on Thursday, 3 December 1992, the Committee had decided to invite the Legal Counsel, although he had not been able to confirm that request. Should the Committee take a formal decision, the Legal Counsel would be ready to provide answers to any questions it might wish to raise.

81. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) thanked the Chairman for his efforts and suggested that the Committee might need time to decide on how to proceed, and that it should take up the matter again at its next meeting.

82. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) said that her delegation was confused as to why the Committee could not obtain the information it required. The issue was basically a political and not a legal one. Her delegation felt strongly that any information needed by the Committee should be made available to it. It appeared that the Secretariat was being excessively technical on the matter.

83. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that it would be advisable to follow the course of action suggested by the delegation of the United Kingdom. However, he was somewhat confused by the response of the Legal Counsel which seemed tantamount to a refusal to answer questions.

84. Mr. FONTAINE (Cuba) said that there were two facets of the problem: first of all, the Secretariat could ascertain whether there was a precedent to justify the need for a decision to be taken by the Committee enabling the Legal Counsel to address it; secondly, the substantive issue included a definition of the status of the Committee members. His delegation was uncertain whether the question of the status of United Nations members was a matter for the Fifth Committee or for another organ. Accordingly, his delegation shared the view of the United Kingdom delegation that consideration of the item should be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

85. Mr. DEINEKO (Russian Federation) said that the point at issue was the right of each country to raise questions and obtain answers, which was apparently not being respected. He recalled that the Legal Counsel had been present when the question of privileges and immunities had been discussed, and the presence of a representative of the relevant substantive department of the Secretariat was essential when such issues were discussed. He recalled that the Controller had been present when the scale of assessments was being discussed and had suggested that, as the questions raised by Belarus and Ukraine required an expert opinion, the Committee might follow the procedure used in respect of the programme budget and seek the opinion of the Controller, who in turn could address the Legal Counsel. However, as the issue was a complex one and involved issues of precedent, he supported the suggestion of the United Kingdom delegation that its consideration should be postponed until the next meeting.

86. Miss SHITAKHA (Kenya) said that the United States delegation had raised an important issue concerning the apparent refusal of the Legal Counsel to answer questions. She recalled that other Secretariat officials attended meetings of other Committees and she shared Cuba's wish to know whether there was any precedent or, more important, any rule that prevented the Legal Counsel from attending. It would be preferable to defer consideration of the item until the next meeting, although she did not wish to establish a precedent whereby delegations wishing to put questions to the Legal Counsel would require a decision of the Committee in order to obtain a legal opinion.

87. Mr. BATIOUK (Ukraine) said that the matter, which had initially concerned Ukraine and Belarus, was one of concern for the Fifth Committee as a whole. It seemed to him from his own correspondence with the Legal Counsel that there was some confusion in the mind of the Legal Counsel himself as to whether he expressed a legal opinion, advice or views. However, whatever the nature of his replies, it was essential for him to submit them to the Committee. Accordingly, and in view of the complex nature of the matter, it should be addressed by the Committee at its next meeting.

88. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) shared the concerns of a number of delegations that the Committee had made a request for the Legal Counsel to attend its meeting and he had not done so. If he was unable to attend the Committee's meeting, he should explain the reasons to the Committee.

89. Mr. BELIAYEV (Belarus) emphasized that the issues being discussed by the Committee concerned questions that had been raised by his delegation, which was grateful to the Chairman for his untiring efforts to obtain answers. His delegation could not leave its questions unanswered and felt that, as no solution had been found to the problem, it should be addressed by the Committee as the first item at the next meeting.

90. The CHAIRMAN explained that, in his conversations with him, the Legal Counsel had said that he would speak at any time and on any matter of concern to the Committee, but that he needed a formal request for a legal opinion, which the Chairman had not been able to confirm. The Legal Counsel was aware of all the comments and questions that had risen in the debate of the Committee. He would inform the Legal Counsel of the discussion that had taken place at the current meeting and suggested that the Committee defer the item until its next meeting.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
38th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 8 December 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 38th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DINU (Romania)

later: Mr. ZAHID (Morocco)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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AGENDA ITEM 120: FINANCING OF THE ACTIVITIES ARISING FROM SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 687 (1991)

(a) UNITED NATIONS IRAQ-KUWAIT OBSERVATION MISSION

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/47/SR.38
17 December 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 111: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/47/11)

1. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should formally request the Legal Counsel to give his views on the following questions, which had been raised in connection with the assessments of Belarus and Ukraine:

"1. Are Belarus and Ukraine 'new Member States' or are they, in terms of Article 3 of the United Nations Charter, original Members of the United Nations, having participated in its activities since its inception?

"2. Is the scale of assessments adopted by consensus for the period 1992, 1993 and 1994, as contained in General Assembly resolution 46/221, valid for Belarus and Ukraine?

"3. Is the scheme of limits - one of the guiding principles of the United Nations assessment methodology - applicable universally or selectively to the States Members of the United Nations in apportioning their assessments?

"4. Are the recommendations of the Committee on Contributions aimed at reviewing and drastically increasing the rates of assessment of Belarus and Ukraine in the middle of a three-year assessment period consistent with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/221 and rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly?

"5. Does any of the above in any way affect the authority of the General Assembly, notwithstanding resolution 46/221 and rule 160, to decide to adopt a scale such as that contained in the report of the Committee on Contributions, which revises the scale adopted by resolution 46/221?"

2. It was so decided.

3. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that it was part of the normal duties of the Legal Counsel to respond to questions in the Committee, and it was thus unnecessary for the Committee to have to put such questions in a formal decision. His delegation had joined in the consensus on the understanding that it did not constitute a precedent.

4. Mr. WOOD (United Kingdom) said that his delegation supported the position taken by the Legal Counsel. The giving of legal advice was different from the provision of information, and it was a good practice for requests for formal legal advice to be approved by the organ in which the matter had arisen. If any individual delegation could seek legal advice, politicized and unbalanced requests might well result.

5. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria), referring to the third question, said that her delegation did not agree that the scheme of limits was a "guiding" principle, but could otherwise join in the consensus.

6. Mr. FLEISCHHAUER (Under-Secretary-General, The Legal Counsel), replying to the questions addressed to him by the Committee, said, with regard to the first question, that, at the second plenary session of the San Francisco Conference in 1945, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic had been invited to be initial Members of the proposed international organization, and at the end of the Conference those countries had signed the Charter and subsequently deposited their instruments of ratification. Since that time, they had never been expelled from the Organization nor readmitted to it. The recent constitutional changes, the change in the relationship between the two States and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or changes in their official designations did not and could not transform them automatically into new Members of the Organization. There was no procedure for that, either in the Charter or in any other document. Consequently, Belarus and Ukraine were, and remained, "original Members" of the United Nations in terms of Article 3 of the Charter and were correctly listed as Members since 1945 in the official records of the Organization.

7. With respect to the second question, he said that paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 46/221 A provided for a scale of assessments for the contributions of Member States to the regular budget of the United Nations for the years 1992, 1993 and 1994, unless a new scale was approved earlier by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Committee on Contributions, should the Committee, in accordance with its mandate and the rules of procedure of the Assembly, so recommend, on the basis of substantial changes in relative capacity to pay. Since the General Assembly had not proceeded to the approval of a new scale, as indicated in that paragraph, the scale of assessments contained in General Assembly resolution 46/221 A applied to all Member States listed therein, including Belarus and Ukraine.

8. Referring to the third question, he said that the scheme of limits was a mechanism to avoid excessive fluctuations in the rates of assessment of Member States. As such, it applied to the rates of assessment of all Member States; it did not, however, apply in the initial determination of the rate of assessment of a new Member State after its admission to membership.

9. With regard to the fourth question, he drew attention to the report of the Committee on Contributions (A/47/11), chapter IV of which was entitled "Assessment of new Member States". The chapter began by stating that the Committee on Contributions had considered the assessment of new Member States in the context of paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 46/221 A and rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly (para. 39). Later in the chapter, the Committee on Contributions reviewed the manner in which the rates of assessment of Belarus and Ukraine had been determined since 1946 and stated that, in view of the unique manner in which those rates had

(Mr. Fleischhauer)

been determined in the context of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and because of the special relationship which had existed among the 15 republics of the former USSR during the base period of the scale of assessments, the Committee on Contributions had decided to include Belarus and Ukraine in its considerations as well (para. 46). That paragraph appeared to suggest that, in the view of the Committee on Contributions, the manner in which the rates of assessment of Belarus and Ukraine had been determined and/or the fundamental change in the relations that had existed between those two States and the former Soviet Union, had led to a situation in which, irrespective of their status as founding Members of the United Nations, they were to be treated as new Member States for the purposes of assessment.

10. Such a hypothesis was legally untenable. Both rule 160 of the rules of procedure and resolution 46/221 required that all Member States should be assessed and given assessment rates. The two instruments were, however, silent on the method of arriving at the rate of assessment. While the manner in which the rates had been determined for Belarus and Ukraine during the past 47 years was certainly unique, the two States had obviously been assessed. Since the inception of the Organization, both States had continuously appeared in all relevant documents and statistics of the Secretariat, the Committee on Contributions and the General Assembly as assessed Member States, and a specific assessment rate had been attributed to them as to all other Member States. It could not, therefore, be said that there had been no assessment at all - which was all that rule 160 and resolution 46/221 required. Accordingly, it was a moot question whether, had there been no assessment at all, the treatment of those States as new Members might have been justified.

11. As to the change in the relations which had existed between Belarus and Ukraine and the former USSR, paragraph 46 of document A/47/11 appeared to imply that, in the view of the Committee on Contributions, that change was a fundamental change of circumstances which justified the treatment of the two States as new Members. Nothing in rule 160, however,provided a basis for such reasoning. Rule 160 referred to new Member States without any specifications or qualifying additions. That seemed to indicate that the term must be understood in the same sense as elsewhere in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, namely, as referring to States newly admitted for membership under the procedures stipulated in Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations, chapter XIV of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and the relevant provisions of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council.

12. Furthermore, nothing in resolution 46/221 pointed to the admissibility of treating previously assessed Members of the Organization belatedly as new Member States. In that connection, it should be noted that the resolution had been adopted only on 20 December 1991, when the process of change had been well established in both Belarus and Ukraine.

(Mr. Fleischhauer)

13. Lastly, there was no precedent for treating a Member State as a new Member for the purposes of assessment other than at the time of its first assessment following its admission to the United Nations. Accordingly, he concluded that the treatment of Belarus and Ukraine as new Member States, as recommended by the Committee on Contributions, was not consistent with General Assembly resolution 46/221 and rule 160 of the Assembly's rules of procedure.

14. With regard to the fifth question, he said that it had caused him great difficulty. The question, as it had been reworded, presupposed that the General Assembly had the authority to adopt the assessment rates recommended by the Committee on Contributions. The answers which he had given to the first four questions had focused on the erroneous treatment of Belarus and Ukraine as new Member States by the Committee on Contributions. If the General Assembly did have the authority which was presupposed by the question, then such authority would not be affected by the answers which he had given. In his view, however, there was no such authority; the adoption of assessment rates for Belarus and Ukraine, as recommended in document A/47/11, would not be consistent with rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, even leaving aside his comments regarding the erroneous conclusions of the Committee on Contributions. The Fifth Committee, being composed of sovereign Member States, could, of course, decide not to apply rule 160 in the case under consideration. That, however, was a course of action which he, as Legal Counsel, could not recommend.

15. Mr. BATIOUK (Ukraine), Mr. BELIAYEV (Belarus) and Mr. AL-ARIMI (Oman) expressed appreciation to the Legal Counsel for his straightforward replies.

16. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 111.

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.18 concerning agenda item 61 (l) (A/47/7/Add.11; A/C.5/47/50)

17. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that the recommendation of the Advisory Committee in paragraph 9 of its report (A/47/7/Add.11) had been presented without adequate justification. His delegation could therefore not accept it. It supported the request made by the Secretary-General, which was entirely reasonable and, indeed, essential if the Register of Conventional Arms was to be a useful tool.

18. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) agreed that the Advisory Committee's argument was not substantiated. The Committee should defer its consideration of the matter until ACABQ could provide an adequate explanation.

19. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) agreed that the matter should be deferred. He appealed for the establishment of a rule that 24 hours should elapse between

(Mr. Merifield, Canada)

the issuance of documentation and its consideration by the Committee in order to give delegations time to address what were often complex matters and to seek instructions where necessary.

20. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that the establishment of such a rule would delay the Committee's work, although it was necessary to have adequate time to reflect upon proposals. In such circumstances, it was important for the Chairman of the Advisory Committee to be present at Fifth Committee meetings.

21. The CHAIRMAN said that the time pressure was such that the Committee could not establish a 24-hour rule, but that every effort would be made to accommodate delegations. The Committee would defer consideration of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.18 pending informal consultations.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.31/Rev.1 concerning agenda item 68 (A/47/Add.11; A/C.5/47/52)

22. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/47/52) and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee (A/47/7/Add.11, paras. 3 and 4), the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.31/Rev.1, no additional appropriations would be required under sections 37 or 41 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

23. It was so decided.

Programme budget implications of draft decision A/C.1/47/L.53 concerning agenda item 63 (A/47/7/Add.11, A/C.5/47/63)

24. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, on the basis of the statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/47/63) and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee (A/47/7/Add.11, paras. 2 and 4), the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft decision A/C.1/47/L.53, no additional appropriations would be required under sections 37 or 41 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

25. It was so decided.

26. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) drew the Committee's attention to his delegation's statement in explanation of its position in the First Committee in connection with the adoption of the draft decision.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.2 concerning agenda item 62 (b) A/47/7/Add.11; A/C.5/47/64)

27. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda), supported by Mr. CHUINKAM (Cameroon), said that it might be preferable for the Committee to consider the matter in the context of

(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

the review of travel and related entitlements for members of organs and subsidiary organs and staff members of the United Nations. If, however, the Committee wished to take a decision, he would like clarification as to what was meant by the words "at the present stage" in paragraph 16 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/47/7/Add.11).

28. The CHAIRMAN said that consideration of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.2 would be deferred pending informal consultations.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.14 concerning agenda item 59 (A/47/7/Add.11; A/C.5/47/65)

29. Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria) proposed that, as the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/65) had been circulated only the day before, a decision on the question should be deferred.

30. It was so decided.

31. Mr. WOOD (United Kingdom) speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that the Committee had taken action on a number of statements of programme budget implications relating to draft resolutions which had been approved by other Main Committees, in a number of instances by vote. Prior to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 41/213 and the application of its budget provisions at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, it could have been expected that votes would have been requested in the Fifth Committee, too. Those Member States which were unable to support the substance of a proposal would thus have demonstrated their inability to support the corresponding funding, while those which supported a proposal would have voted in favour. Consistent with the spirit of the process of reform and renewal in the United Nations and the practice followed so successfully at previous sessions, none of the members of the European Community had requested a vote in connection with the decisions which had been taken. They wished to recall, however, the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 on the use and operation of the contingency fund, including its use and operation in respect of redeployment or modifications of existing activities and in respect of the deferral of additional activities. It was essential for continued confidence in the reform process that those provisions should be scrupulously observed. The Twelve reserved the right, and emphasized the need, to examine all possibilities for redeployment or deferral in the context of consideration of the consolidated statement to be submitted towards the end of the current session.

Implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/185: (a) Situation of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP); (b) Strengthening of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) of the Economic Commission for Africa (A/C.5/47/53)

32. Mr. ACAKPO-SATCHIVI (Secretary of the Committee) read out a statement by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the question. As indicated in paragraph 10 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/53), in 1991 four Professional posts at the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) had been financed by the United Nations through a non-recurrent grant and, at its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly had decided to provide a non-recurrent grant of $850,000 for the 1992-1993 biennium to cover the costs of those posts. The Advisory Committee had been informed by representatives of the Secretary-General that, as a result of the 1990 review, the Institute had recast its role and moved away from traditional training to operational activities, in particular, short-term training, research, consultancy and advisory services, and networking. The Advisory Committee had noted the efforts made by the Institute to improve its financial situation (A/C.5/47/53, paras. 15-22). The Advisory Committee had also noted that he intended to review the need for the continuation of United Nations assistance to IDEP in the context of the preparation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 (para. 23).

33. With regard to the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Advisory Committee recalled its comments on the subject in its report on the financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors (A/47/500) and, in particular, its request that the necessary corrective measures be undertaken as soon as possible to resolve the problems and to take the Board's findings into account when proposals for the programme budget for 1994-1995 were being prepared (para. 46).

34. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) said that the Committee had already taken a clear decision in favour of strengthening the MULPOCs and, in his view, the restructuring process should not be regarded as a reason to disregard that decision. He wondered, in that connection, if the Administration had any intention of further restructuring IDEP.

35. Mr. DUVAL (Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance) said that, as the Acting Controller had pointed out, the intention was that the restructuring should be carried out over a limited period of time. The Secretary-General's recommendation was intended to be limited to the redeployment of posts and, although it was clear that the strengthening of the MULPOCs was a priority goal, it was difficult to identify posts available for redeployment before the restructuring of ECA had been completed. That was why the Secretary-General had suggested that a decision on the question should be deferred until the presentation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

36. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it take note of the Secretary-General's proposals.

37. It was so decided.

38. Mr. Zahid (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 120: FINANCING OF THE ACTIVITIES ARISING FROM SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 687 (1991):

(a) UNITED NATIONS IRAQ-KUWAIT OBSERVATION MISSION (A/47/637 and A/47/735)

39. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) (A/47/637), and the report of ACABQ (A/47/735).

40. Mr. MONAYAIR (Kuwait) expressed appreciation to the Chairman of ACABQ for the information contained in document A/47/735. With regard to paragraph 20 of that document, in which the Advisory Committee recalled that it had invited the Secretary-General to ascertain whether petrol, oil and lubricants could be made available by the host Governments free of cost or at less than the rate used in the estimates, he said that, in July 1992, his Government had agreed to make a voluntary contribution in the amount of $700,000, representing 50 per cent of the total cost of oil and oil products required for the Mission; that contribution was not mentioned in the report. His Government had also provided assistance in other areas, such as housing and transport. For example, it had paid $2.6 million a year since 1991 for the rental of storage area, $126,000 a year for the rental of a villa used by UNIKOM and $504,000 a year for the rental of other housing. Recently, the Mission had requested the expansion of its headquarters, which would require the extension of water pipes at a cost of approximately $10 million. All that information should be included in both the report of the Secretary-General and the report of ACABQ.

41. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) requested clarification from the Secretariat as to why the information just provided by the representative of Kuwait had not been included in document A/47/637.

42. Mr. HOSANG (Assistant Director of the Unit for Peace-keeping Matters and Special Assignments) said that, at the time the report had been prepared, neither the Field Operations Division nor the Office of Programming Planning, Budget and Finance had received a clear indication that reimbursement had been made to the Mission for actual amounts paid for oil and lubricants. With regard to the other voluntary contributions, his office had addressed inquiries to the Field Operations Division, but had received no additional information. The utilization of premises provided by the Government would automatically have reduced the estimates of expenditure submitted in the report of the Secretary-General. His office would contact the Permanent Mission of Kuwait to request that the relevant information be provided in writing.

43. Mr. MONAYAIR (Kuwait) said that, while he appreciated the clarification, he had not been referring to reimbursement, but to the commitment made by his Government to pay 50 per cent of the petrol and fuel costs. His delegation would like to see that contribution mentioned in the report.

44. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should hold informal consultations on the agenda item as soon as possible.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
39th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 9 December 1992
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 39th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DINU (Romania)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

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18 December 1992

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields (A/47/753)

1. Mr. THORNBURGH (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields (A/47/753), said that the measures announced by the Secretary-General were in keeping with the objectives of the restructuring of the Secretariat, as outlined by the Secretary-General in his foreword to the report submitted to the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in July 1992 (E/1992/82/Add.1), paragraph 105 of his annual report on the work of the Organization (A/47/1), and his statement to the General Assembly on 2 November 1992 at the opening of the debate on the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Those objectives were to enhance the Secretariat's capacity to implement effectively the mandates of Member States and to enable the Secretariat to adjust rapidly to new circumstances and tasks.

2. The Secretary-General had, on a number of occasions, emphasized the importance which he attached to the fulfilment of one of the fundamental objectives of the Charter, namely, the development of all countries and the improvement of the living conditions of all peoples. The Secretary-General had also stressed the link between development objectives and policies and actions related to the search for peace.

3. The note by the Secretary-General (A/47/753) described the main features of the three new Departments based on the three clusters of functions announced by the Secretary-General on 2 November 1992. The specific functions and the distribution of responsibilities for the implementation of the various programmes and subprogrammes adopted by the General Assembly, as well as staff and other resources for the three new Departments, would be communicated to the Committee in the final revised budget estimates to be submitted early in 1993. The Secretariat's first proposal to the Committee was, therefore, that the final revised estimates should be considered at the beginning of the second year of the implementation of the current budget. It was imperative for the General Assembly to consider the budgetary and programmatic aspects of the second phase of the restructuring. The revised estimates would include an analysis of the programmatic aspects of and justifications for the restructuring.

4. The Secretariat's second proposal concerned the treatment of the current revised estimates. As the Acting Controller had explained, the Secretariat proposed that the General Assembly should take note of the revised estimates as a whole and postpone its decision on the number and the distribution of high-level posts. He was confident that a satisfactory solution to that

(Mr. Thornburgh)

question could be found through dialogue and cooperation. As indicated by the Secretary-General, the streamlining of the upper echelons of the Secretariat remained a priority objective.

5. Thirdly, the Secretariat proposed that the preparation and consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 should take place in 1993. The programme budget must be a true reflection of the programmes adopted by the General Assembly and the structure put in place by the Secretary-General. The Department of Administration and Management would make every effort to reconcile transparency, or the amount and type of information which the Committee required in order to take a decision on the Organization's resources, with simplicity, in other words, the production of a budget document that was easy to read. He expressed appreciation, on behalf of the Secretary-General, for the cooperation shown by the Committee in the difficult, but necessary, process of adjusting the Secretariat to the important tasks which it must assume in order to serve the international community in the best possible manner.

6. Mr. TOMMO MONTHE (Cameroon) said that he welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to initiate a dialogue with Member States on the question of restructuring. Since February 1992, Member States had been inclined to think that what they were hearing from the Secretary-General was a kind of monologue. A balance was being restored between the political and the economic and social sectors of the Organization's activities. It was clear from document A/47/753 that the activities outlined in the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277-S/24111) were not the Organization's only priority.

7. With regard to the creation of an additional Department in the economic and social field, his delegation would appreciate clarification from the Secretariat as to how the work of the three new Departments would be coordinated. Current activities would have to be reallocated and a decision would need to be made on the allocation of new activities such as those connected with the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Mention should be made, in that context, of General Assembly resolution 32/197, which was relevant to the issue of the division of responsibilities between Headquarters and the field.

8. It should be noted that the restructuring was not taking place in a vacuum. A number of decisions had been taken in recent years to which Member States attached great importance, such as those intended to address the critical economic situation of African countries. Restructuring would affect the balance of power among the main organs of the United Nations, as envisaged in the Charter, and would also have implications for the medium-term plan and the programme budget. Those implications should be carefully studied.

9. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) said that he shared many of the views expressed by the previous speaker. With reference to paragraph 14 of document A/47/753, which stated that the new Department for Development Support and Management

(Mr. Clavijo, Colombia)

Services would serve as a focal point for technical cooperation and would also act as an executing agency in such areas as institutional development and human resources development, he said that his delegation had some questions with regard to the second function. During the discussion of the medium-term plan, a number of delegations in both the Second and the Fifth Committees had questioned the advisability of the two functions being performed by a single unit. The Secretary-General had postponed a solution to that issue. His delegation was unclear as to what the new Department was expected to do and what its comparative advantages would be in relation to those of the specialized agencies, the regional commissions and the United Nations Development Programme. With regard to the last sentence of the paragraph, which indicated that the Department's technical cooperation with developing countries would be focused on the requirements of the least developed countries and those of economies in transition, he noted that technical cooperation had traditionally been extended to developing countries within a multilateral framework. If the Secretariat was proposing to give priority to those two groups of countries, that would exceed its competence. While the Secretary-General was entitled to decide on the organization of work within the Secretariat, the definition of the Organization's programmatic priorities was clearly the prerogative of Member States. His delegation wished to know what priority would be given to developing countries which did not fit into the two categories specified.

10. His delegation was also concerned about the proposal in paragraph 24 regarding the redeployment of posts from administrative to substantive areas. There had never, to his knowledge, been any suggestion of a conflict between those two sectors. While his delegation did not object to the principle that the number of posts should be commensurate with the needs of the Organization and that, on occasion, a reduction in the number of posts would be required, it believed that the Department of Administration and Management should undertake a detailed consideration of the distribution at various levels of the posts mentioned in document A/47/753).

11. Mr. RAE (India) said that his delegation shared the views of the previous speakers. In general, India welcomed the restructuring exercise and believed that the proposals set out in document A/47/753 sought to restore a balance between the political and the economic and social sectors of the Organization's activities. With regard to paragraph 23, which indicated that the Secretary-General intended to eliminate four Assistant Secretary-General posts in the Department of Administration and Management, he recalled that, in a statement to the Fifth Committee on personnel questions, the Secretary-General had mentioned the possibility of introducing a career-level equivalent to the Assistant Secretary-General level. It was unclear whether there was any connection between that suggestion and the proposal in paragraph 23, which did not mention the substitution of any posts for those being eliminated.

12. With regard to the proposal in paragraph 24 concerning the redeployment of posts from administrative to substantive areas, his delegation supported

(Mr. Rae, India)

that idea in principle, provided that it did not adversely affect programme delivery in any area. Similar considerations applied to the overall reduction in the number of posts.

13. As to the proposal in paragraph 25 that the revised budget estimates should be considered early in 1993, his delegation noted that the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) was not scheduled to meet in 1993, and pointed out that it would have an important contribution to make to the consideration of the programmatic aspects of the number and the distribution of high-level posts.

14. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) agreed with the representative of Cameroon that the opening of a dialogue on restructuring between the Secretary-General and the Member States was a positive development. He welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals, since they served to restore the balance between the political and economic sectors, which had been previously tilted in favour of political issues. He supported the proposal in paragraph 21 of the note by the Secretary-General that the post of Director of the Centre for Human Rights should be upgraded to the level of Assistant Secretary-General, in the light of the increasing emphasis placed on the promotion of human rights. His delegation had previously opposed the downgrading of the post and he hoped that the upgrading would not be merely symbolic and would not be done at the expense of other equally deserving cases.

15. He shared the apprehension expressed by the representative of Colombia concerning the elimination of four Assistant Secretary-General posts in the Department of Administration and Management, which should be the cornerstone of an efficient, well-managed and financially sound Organization. He agreed with the representative of India that clarification was needed as to the Secretary-General's intentions, in particular, whether he planned to replace the Assistant Secretary-General posts with D-3 posts. He pointed out that the workload of the Department had increased in recent years and downgrading the posts in question would not serve its interests, since those concerned needed to have the requisite authority in order to fulfil their functions properly.

16. Consideration should also be given to the programmatic implications of restructuring. In that connection, he shared the concerns expressed by the representative of India concerning the role of CPC in addressing that question in the light of the revised estimates.

17. Mr. INOMATA (Japan), remarking on the fact that the note by the Secretary-General had been circulated under two agenda items, noted that the Committee was responsible for considering the budgetary aspects of the question, but wondered to what extent the General Assembly would be able to address the substantive aspects of restructuring, since no provision had been made for that purpose. Perhaps the Fifth Committee could provide a forum for such discussions.

18. He noted that the changes announced by the Secretary-General were part of

(Mr. Inomata, Japan)

the redeployment process and that the high-level posts which had been reshuffled or created would be accommodated within existing resources. However, it was clear that the establishment of three new departments would involve changes in the number of Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General posts. It would be useful if the Secretary-General could provide an overall view of how those posts were to be allocated.

19. With regard to the question of dialogue between the Secretary-General and the Member States, a pattern seemed to have been established whereby the Secretary-General announced his decisions and then submitted proposed revised estimates to cover those decisions. He wondered to what extent those estimates were genuine proposals, since the action concerned had already been taken. As a result, the Committee was being asked to give its approval after the fact. That procedure was unacceptable and failed to give proper weight to the role of CPC and ACABQ. Redeployment measures should be approved in accordance with the budgetary procedures provided for in the Financial Regulations, particularly in the case of transfers of resources between sections. Unless something was done, restructuring by the Secretary-General would continue on a de facto basis, without proper control.

20. According to paragraph 27 of the note by the Secretary-General, the statements of programme budget implications relating to new or additional activities would be provisional and basically at the maintenance level. It was far from clear what was meant by "provisional". He wondered what precise form the programme budget implications to be submitted by the Secretary-General would take. It seemed that momentous decisions were being taken, particularly in the context of the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, on the basis of provisional budget provisions and that the Committee would not be fulfilling its function of scrutinizing the programme budget implications of all decisions having financial implications.

21. The proposals regarding budgetary procedures set out in paragraphs 26, 27 and 28 appeared plausible, but his delegation was deeply concerned about their validity. For example, he wondered whether the proposal in paragraph 26 (a) that the General Assembly should take note of the current revised estimates was tantamount to giving de facto approval to the redeployment. According to paragraph 26 (b), the Secretary-General would present the final number and distribution of high-level posts financed from the regular budget early in 1993. However, in order to discuss the question, it was necessary to know the current situation regarding the number of high-level posts, taking into account the latest changes.

22. In addition, it was not clear what was meant by the proposal in paragraph 28 to submit the next budget at a later stage in 1993. He wondered what kind of delay would be involved and whether there would be sufficient time for the vital input by CPC and ACABQ. He felt that the proposals regarding the budgetary process set out in paragraphs 25 to 28 needed to be thoroughly discussed by the Advisory Committee, which should be asked to submit its observations and proposals on the question in the near future.

23. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that he supported the Secretary-General's efforts, as chief administrative officer, to make the best possible use of available resources and to focus on substantive activities such as human rights and sustainable development. He also welcomed the link which had been established between those two areas. However, the Secretary-General's initiatives did have technical implications for the budgetary process and his delegation was concerned that the procedures should be properly observed. In that connection, the Advisory Committee had already remarked on the difficulty the Administration faced in implementing a budget whose structure did not correspond to the current structure of the Secretariat. In addition, whatever action was taken by the General Assembly in response to specific proposals by the Secretary-General, the Committee would need to consider and approve the relevant appropriations for 1993 by budgetary section, since those appropriations would provide the basis for determining the assessed contributions of Member States for the coming year. Predictability in that area was an important consideration for his own delegation and for many others. Although assurances had been given during informal consultations, he would like formal confirmation that any revised estimates presented early in 1993 would not increase the financial liability of Member States for that year, but would deal only with the redistribution of resources within the level already approved. He would also welcome confirmation that any additional proposals the Secretariat intended to put forward would respect the budgetary procedures of the Organization, particularly the provisions of resolution 41/213.

24. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) welcomed the decisions taken by the Secretary-General in his capacity as chief administrative officer of the Organization. However, he would welcome reassurance that the proposals set out in paragraphs 23 and 24 of the note by the Secretary-General (A/47/753) would not undermine the sound financial management of the Organization. With regard to the budgetary process, his delegation could accept the proposals put forward in paragraph 26, on the understanding that normal budgetary procedures would be followed in compliance with the provisions of resolution 41/213, particularly with regard to the need to adopt the budget outline during the current session. On the question of the submission of the next programme budget, perhaps it would be possible to hold two 2-week sessions of CPC during 1993.

25. Mr. CARDOSO (Brazil) associated himself with the comments made by the representatives of Cameroon, Colombia and India, and with the suggestion made by the representative of the Netherlands regarding the possibility of holding two sessions of CPC in 1993. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's initiatives, which were intended to help the United Nations to play a more effective part in dealing with the problems facing the international community. Those initiatives were particularly timely at the present stage, when the United Nations was in the process of reviewing both its agenda for peace and its agenda for development.

26. Mr. FONTAINE (Cuba) said that his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's initiatives with regard to the restructuring of the Organization, particularly in the economic and social fields, which were an indication that he intended to give those areas the priority they deserved. His delegation welcomed the dynamism which the process of change in the United Nations and the Secretariat had assumed, but felt there was a need to maintain an overall perspective on the reform process. It therefore considered that, at the current stage, the General Assembly should take note of all the Secretary-General's proposals and request him to provide it with a comprehensive overview of his plans for reform. It was important, also, that the Secretary-General's proposals should not prejudge the decisions and arrangements currently under discussion in other bodies, especially the Second Committee and the plenary Assembly.

27. It seemed to his delegation that there was a lack of precision in some of the references made to the Secretary-General's prerogatives in his note (A/47/753), for example, in paragraphs 6 and 14. The General Assembly had a clear role to play with regard to any decisions relating to the structure of the Secretariat and the allocation of posts within it; it would therefore be more appropriate to refer to recommendations by the Secretary-General, rather than decisions. His delegation would regard such recommendations as proposals, and would hope that the expert bodies would examine and report on them, as well as on the proposals contained in the revised estimates.

28. Mr. SASTRAWAN (Indonesia) said that his delegation shared the views expressed by the representatives of Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, India and Uganda, and would like further clarification of the last part of paragraph 14 of the note by the Secretary-General.

29. Mr. AL MAQTARI (Yemen) agreed with the comments made by the representatives of Brazil, Cameroon, India and Uganda. In view of the fact that many areas of the Secretariat had already been restructured, he wondered why the opinions of Member States were being sought at the present stage rather than earlier. In connection with paragraph 3 of the report, he asked for more information regarding the advice given to the Secretary-General by the Panel of independent advisers referred to therein. He expressed the hope that the Assistant Secretary-General to be appointed Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women (para. 22) would be a representative of a developing country. He would also like clarification with regard to the reference made in paragraph 13 to close cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, and as to whether Member States would be represented on the high-level advisory board referred to in paragraph 9 and whether due regard would be given to the principle of equitable geographical distribution in the appointment of its members.

30. Mr. TANG Guang Ting (China) said that he shared the concerns raised by the representatives of Colombia, India and Uganda with regard to the note by the Secretary-General (A/47/753). The affairs of the United Nations community should be dealt with collectively by all, especially matters relating to such important questions as restructuring, and should be settled on the basis of

(Mr. Tang Guang Ting, China)

democratic consultation with Member States. His delegation accordingly welcomed the dialogue on restructuring that had been initiated by the Secretary-General, and hoped that it could be continued.

31. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that his delegation appreciated the initiative taken by the Secretary-General, which was intended to involve the entire international community in a common effort to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization.

32. His delegation took it for granted that no final decisions could be taken on the Secretary-General's proposals until CPC and ACABQ had had an opportunity to express their views. It hoped, however, that the General Assembly would be able to take some decisions before the end of the current year so that the Organization would be able to function in 1993.

33. With regard to some of the specific matters referred to in the report, he said he shared the views of the Cuban representative concerning paragraph 14, and would like further clarification, in connection with paragraph 16, as to what activities were likely to be redeployed to the new Headquarters Departments. Paragraph 23 also seemed to require clarification, as it was difficult to understand how departmental fragmentation could be overcome by reducing personnel without integrating the units involved. The Department of Administration and Management was a very large one, and, if it were managed by a single Under-Secretary-General, the enhanced efficiency desired by all might not be achieved. It would be useful, in that connection, to have a clearer indication from the Secretary-General of the final shape of the Department, as he envisaged it.

34. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said that he shared the views expressed by the representatives of Brazil, Cameroon, China, Ghana and Uganda. He regarded the note by the Secretary-General (A/47/753) as an illustration of the cooperation between the Secretariat and the General Assembly and a confirmation of the balance between the roles they should play with regard to the restructuring of the Organization.

35. His delegation had already expressed some concern regarding paragraph 14 of the report, and hoped the Secretary-General would be able to provide the Committee further clarification and take into account the concerns expressed by Member States. He intended to raise some further questions with regard to the report in the course of the informal discussions.

36. His delegation considered that the General Assembly should take note of the Secretary-General's proposals, request ACABQ and CPC to consider them in 1993 and ask the Secretary-General to submit an overview of his restructuring plans to the General Assembly at its next session, so that they could work together more effectively on the important task of restructuring.

37. Mr. DUHALT (Mexico) said that further information was required on the linkage between the current medium-term plan, one of the priorities of which

(Mr. Duhalt, Mexico)

was the promotion of the economic development of developing countries, and the provisions of paragraph 14 of the note by the Secretary-General (A/47/753) concerning technical cooperation with developing countries by the proposed Department for Development Support and Management Services.

38. With reference to the next phase of the Secretariat reform, mentioned in paragraph 19, his delegation wished to know the Secretary-General's specific proposals in the important areas of decentralization, the strengthening of the Organization's regional presence and the promotion of a unified United Nations presence at the country level, as well as the programme implications of those proposals, so that Member States could participate fully in their implementation.

39. Mexico shared the concerns expressed by Ghana about the proposed elimination of posts at the Assistant Secretary-General level referred to in paragraph 23. He sought clarification regarding the definition of responsibilities and the final structure of the units within the Department of Administration and Management and stressed the need to keep the matter under consideration, inter alia, in informal consultations.

40. Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium) said that his delegation supported the view of the United Kingdom regarding the revised estimates for 1993 and the need to keep expenditure within the limits already approved.

41. With reference to paragraph 14, he drew attention to a discrepancy in the French text, which referred to countries, rather than economies, in transition.

42. Mrs. EMERSON (Portugal) said that her delegation shared the views expressed by the representative of the Netherlands. It believed that the restructuring of the United Nations was fully justified and favoured the stage-by-stage approach which had been adopted. Referring to the question that had been raised as to why the Secretary-General informed the General Assembly of his decisions only after they had been taken, she said that, in essence, the Secretary-General was seeking a vote of confidence and that Portugal, for its part, was happy to give him that vote.

43. The CHAIRMAN said that the technical issues raised by delegations would be more appropriately addressed in the Committee's informal consultations, but that the Under-Secretary-General and the Acting Controller would respond on general points of principle.

44. Mr. THORNBURGH (Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management) said that the process of reform and restructuring was both difficult and dynamic and by its very nature, untidy and that the forebearance of delegations was therefore essential if it was to succeed. The stage-by-stage approach adopted by the Secretary-General had the added effect that actions undertaken at previous stages might be altered by those undertaken subsequently.

(Mr. Thornburgh)

45. In response to the question raised by Cameroon concerning the coordination of the activities of the three new Departments and the reallocation of current activities, he said that the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was overseeing that process and holding regular meetings with the three new Under-Secretaries-General.

46. A number of delegations had raised questions about the provisions of paragraph 14, which would require further discussion in the informal consultations. He pointed out, however, that the new Department for Development Support and Management Services would have executive authority in selected areas only, in which it already had a comparative advantage over the agencies mentioned by the representative of Colombia. With reference to the last sentence of that paragraph, he assured delegations that there was no intention to pre-empt the priorities already established by the General Assembly.

47. With regard to the redeployment exercise, he said that posts were being examined on an individual basis, to determine their continued relevance. Thus far, 74 redundant posts in the Secretariat had been redeployed to other priority areas. The objective was not to identify a group of posts in the administrative area for wholesale redeployment to the substantive area, but to identify redundant posts, both at Headquarters and in the various United Nations entities, which could be redeployed to other areas. The overall aim was to concentrate maximum resources in substantive areas in the field, where they would have a direct impact on the implementation of programmes. Those measures would, furthermore, be carried out without prejudice to the functions already assigned to the Department of Administration and Management.

48. Responding to the question raised by India and other delegations with regard to paragraph 23, concerning the elimination of four posts at the Assistant Secretary-General level, he recalled the Secretary-General's statement on personnel matters to the Committee at its 21st meeting in which he had expressed his intention of achieving an overall reduction in the number of Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General posts, making a clear differentiation between political and career appointments and studying the possibility of introducing a career-level equivalent to the Assistant Secretary-General level on the political side. While the results of that study were not yet known, it was clear that some posts at the Assistant Secretary-General level in the new Department of Administration and Management, in particular the Office of the Controller, were candidates for the proposed new career-level posts.

49. Finally, he welcomed the observation by the representative of Uganda concerning the restoration of the Assistant Secretary-General post in the Centre for Human Rights and noted that the allocation of 17 much-needed additional posts to the Centre was a good example of constructive redeployment.

50. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller), responding to questions of a budgetary nature relating to the note by the Secretary-General on restructuring (A/47/753), said that it was essential for the General Assembly to adopt a revised budget for the biennium 1992-1993. On the basis of a revised appropriation, Member States would be assessed for 1993. The decisions that the General Assembly might wish to take on the revised estimates currently under consideration and on additional revised estimates to be presented early next year should not and would not change that basic requirement. With regard to paragraph 27 of the note, although the words "at the maintenance level" might be misleading, the intention of the Secretariat was to propose to the General Assembly through statements of programme budget implications the additional resources required during the first part of 1993 to implement the mandated activities, on the understanding that the additional revised estimates to be considered early next year might modify such requirements in the light of changes in the organizational structure of the Secretariat. Statements of programme budget implications at the "maintenance level" would in any case be treated in accordance with the normal procedures, including the use of the contingency fund.

51. He stressed that one of the fundamental reasons for the proposal to submit additional revised estimates early next year was the need to preserve and enhance the necessary dialogue between two of the major organs of the Charter. Also, the involvement of Member States in a budgetary process which should remain orderly was one of the main requirements of resolution 41/213. Such involvement meant, in addition, that the documents presented by the Secretariat should be fully transparent.

52. The additional, or final, revised estimates to be presented in early 1993 would not modify the overall level of the revised budget for the biennium 1992-1993 as it would be appropriated by the General Assembly in a few days. The additional revised estimates would, within that overall level of resources, propose a different distribution among sections and would also indicate a different distribution of responsibilities within a modified Secretariat structure.

53. On the question of the number and distribution of high-level posts, which would be further discussed in informal consultations, he reiterated that the intention of the Secretary-General, as indicated in his note, was to streamline the upper echelon of the Secretariat. The proposal to postpone a decision on the reduction of such posts proposed in the revised estimates currently before the Assembly had been made in order to facilitate the process of implementing the decisions of the Secretary-General indicated in the note. The final number and distribution of high-level posts for the biennium 1992-1993 would be reflected in the new revised estimates to be presented to the Assembly at the beginning of next year. In general, the debate on the issue which had taken place in the Fifth Committee had shown that "balance" and "dialogue" were key elements of a successful implementation of the restructuring of the Secretariat.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
40th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 9 December 1992
at 3.15 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 40th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZAHID (Morocco)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

* Items considered together.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.18 concerning agenda item 61 (1) (continued) (A/47/7/Add.11; A/C.5/47/50)

In the absence of Mr. Dinu (Romania), Mr. Zahid (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/47/50) on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.18, relating to transparency in armaments. In that connection, he recalled that the representative of the Netherlands had expressed disagreement with the recommendations in paragraph 9 of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (A/47/7/Add.11).

2. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the recommendations of the Advisory Committee in paragraph 9 of document A/47/7/Add.11 could have been the source of some misunderstanding. The Advisory Committee had not said that the Secretary-General should not implement the requirements arising out of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.18, but rather that, if the Secretary-General had any problem with respect to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, any additional requirements could be reported in the context of the performance report. That was a procedure that the Committee had adopted not only for small items but also for other items included in the report.

3. He pointed out that when the question of appropriations for the Register of Conventional Arms had last been before the Committee, the Secretary-General had indicated that he would absorb a total of $10,000 in temporary assistance for that activity.

4. With respect to the requirements for computer services, ACABQ was of the view that the hardware and software could be obtained. If there were any additional requirements, there was nothing preventing the Secretary-General from reporting back to the General Assembly in the context of the performance report.

5. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that it was not a matter of principle for his Government that the Chairman of ACABQ should be present when the Committee decided matters before it. He asked the members of the Secretariat through the Chairman whether the limited additional amounts in question could or could not be absorbed in the current budget appropriation for that section.

6. Ms. RODSMOEN (Norway), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), said that she would welcome a reply from the Secretariat regarding the question posed by the representative of the Netherlands. The Nordic countries were not convinced that the amount of $79,500 which had been requested by the Secretary-General could be absorbed from within the overall resources provided for disarmament activities under section 37 as suggested by ACABQ in its report. The Nordic countries had taken note of paragraph 9 of the ACABQ report which read: "additional requirements could be reported in the context of the performance report". Having heard the explanation of the Chairman of ACABQ on that subject, the Nordic countries, as sponsors of the consensus resolution on transparency in armaments (A/C.1/47/L.18), would have preferred a decision by the Fifth Committee to approve allocation of the proposed $79,500 to the operation and development of the Register on Conventional Arms.

7. She recalled that, in operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General had been requested to ensure that sufficient resources should be made available to the Secretariat to operate and maintain the Register. For that reason, the Nordic countries fully supported the Secretary-General's proposal to use the contingency fund for that purpose. She recalled further that the Nordic countries had urged the Fifth Committee to follow its normal procedures by taking note of the required estimate of $79,500, on the understanding that any additional appropriations required by the Secretary-General would be submitted towards the end of the current session in the context of a consolidated statement on all programme budget implications.

8. Mr. KELLY (Ireland) said that Ireland attached considerable importance to the operation of the Register and had also taken note of the recommendation in the draft resolution to make available sufficient resources for operating and maintaining the Register. His Government therefore associated itself with the comments of the Norwegian representative.

9. Mr. NA CHAPASSAK (Australia) said that Australia associated itself with the positions of Norway and Ireland. In view of the fact that his Government had only recently received the ACABQ report, he would pursue the matter in informal consultation.

10. Mr. CARDOSO (Brazil) welcomed the proposal of Norway.

11. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller) said, in response to the questions of Netherlands and Norway, that the Secretariat had always refrained - other than in very exceptional cases - from expressing a view on recommendations of the Advisory Committee, as that was not its role. In preparing estimates for programme budget implications, the Secretariat was extremely careful in proposing requests for additional resources both because the question of the use of the contingency fund was very important and because the overall provision of General Assembly resolution 41/213 (1987) requested the Secretariat to look at various possibilities for absorption. In the case of

(Mr. Baudot)

the programme budget implications of the proposal for the Register, the Secretariat had been very careful both in its estimates of requests and in proposing that posts should be found through redeployment.

12. In estimating budgets, the Secretariat had had to look carefully for resources already available so as to avoid requests for additional resources, and also to take into account the fact that activities of the Secretariat with regard to disarmament were still being restructured. With respect to the use of second performance reports as a vehicle for additional requests, he noted that it had been done before, and that it was part of the evolution towards the budgetary process provided for under resolution 41/213 (1987).

13. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) endorsed the draft resolution that had emerged from the First Committee, adding that, once it had been passed in the Fifth Committee, his Government would support it in the General Assembly. He requested the Acting Controller to address the question of the possible negative impact upon the delivery of the programmes mandated in draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.18.

14. Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon) supported the proposal of the Nordic countries and requested that the appropriation should be granted as requested.

15. Mr. ORR (Canada) said that his Government had grave reservations about dealing with post facto appropriations and asked whether the Secretariat could guarantee that the Register programme could be implemented within the current approved appropriation for the Department without recourse to additional appropriations.

16. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller) said that he always hesitated to make guarantees with respect to budgeting questions. As the overall resource base of the Department which had been administering the Register was small, finding alternatives was not easy. In addition, there were many shortcomings in the procedures used by the Secretariat for requesting additional resources.

17. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that his Government welcomed the action of the First Committee in recommending adoption of the draft resolution. However, he was equally concerned about the financial arrangements of the Organization, and while he was by no means always content with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, he believed that the best way to maintain confidence in the administrative and financial functioning of the Organization was to follow the recommendations of ACABQ as systematically as possible. He also welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General in indicating that a significant proportion of the requirements mandated in the resolution were to be met through redeployment. Moreover, the additional requirements identified and calculated by the Secretariat were relatively modest.

18. Given the past experience of underfinancing of the Organization, his Government viewed it as a matter of concern that additional appropriations

(Mr. Kinchen, United Kingdom)

should be proposed which would not necessarily lead to full financing. In the case of additional appropriations for the Register, the recommendations of ACABQ seemed to his Government to be consistent with the approach adopted in the past with regard to small sums. His understanding of the impact of the recommendation of ACABQ was that the Secretariat would implement the Register, and in the event that the appropriation for the corresponding section should prove to be insufficient, there could be recourse to a request for an additional appropriation from the contingency fund in the context of the second performance report. He hoped, therefore, that the draft resolution could be forwarded for adoption, but also that the Committee could, in that case and in others, proceed in accordance with the recommendations of ACABQ.

19. Mr. BIDNYI (Russian Federation) endorsed the statement of the United Kingdom representative.

20. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) appreciated the comments made by the United Kingdom representative, but he did not have the feeling that the report of ACABQ was accurate. Moreover, his Government had had considerable difficulty with the current rules on redeployment of resources solely within sections. However, as those regulations were the operative ones under the current system, it was incumbent upon the Secretariat to find savings so that at the end of the year the actual expenditure would correspond to what had been in the original estimate. Until an improved budgeting procedure allowing for much wider redeployments could be devised, his Government would prefer to establish a revised estimate to reflect exactly the requirements of the programme described in the draft resolution. He suspected that the Secretariat was in fact intending to make up for any deficits in the programme by billing Member States at the end of the biennium and then adding that sum to the next assessment. Therefore, he requested the Secretariat to provide a clearer definition of the terms used in paragraph 9.

21. Another question of concern was whether it was correct within current budget procedures to arrive at a definite estimate of need in the context of the performance report. He wondered whether it would not be better for the Committee to face the larger question of reforming budget procedures. In addition, the fact that ACABQ had come up with the recommendation did not necessarily imply automatic approval by the Fifth Committee. For example, the General Assembly had already made a substantial and major revision to a recommendation of ACABQ concerning the granting of a commitment authority to the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM).

22. In conclusion, he requested that, in the future, the ACABQ report should be delivered to the missions as expeditiously as possible, as representatives needed to consult with their capitols before deciding how they would vote on agenda items before the Fifth Committee.

23. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that his Government would maintain its proposal to adopt the draft resolution. While it was true that the Advisory Committee played an important role, it was not uncommon for the Fifth Committee to decide not to adopt the recommendations of ACABQ or to adopt them only in part. Until the General Assembly determined that ACABQ recommendations would be adopted automatically, the Netherlands would continue to believe that ACABQ, while an important advisory committee, was nevertheless not in a position to make its recommendations binding; therefore, the Netherlands endorsed the proposal of the Nordic countries as outlined by the representative of Norway.

24. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the position of the Advisory Committee on that item was the same as its position on documents A/C.5/47/64 and 65. Therefore, with reference to the statement of the representative of Canada, none of its statements had contravened current budget procedures. When the Advisory Committee made the recommendation that additional appropriations could be reported in the context of the performance report, it was possible that the Secretary-General could report that no additional appropriations were required over budget by transfers within the budget in the context of the performance report. The state of information processing left much to be desired, but was expected to improve with the implementation of the new information management system. The Advisory Committee did not presume to dictate to the Fifth Committee; its function was purely advisory.

25. Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon) suggested that the Advisory Committee recommendations in document A/47/7/Add.11 should be discussed in informal consultation.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.2 concerning agenda item 62 (b) (continued) (A/C.5/47/64)

26. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the same procedures had been followed as in the consideration of document A/C.5/47/50. He drew attention to paragraph 6, containing estimates for the payment of travel and subsistence for representatives of Governments attending the organizational meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on security questions in Central Africa. Paragraph 12 contained estimates of the requirements to undertake the activities.

27. The Advisory Committee recommended that the programme of work should be carried out and that additional resources should be reported in the context of the programme report. However, he drew attention to document A/C 5/47/61, resulting from General Assembly decision 46/450 requiring the review of travel and related entitlements. That document had yet to be reviewed by the Fifth Committee.

(Mr. Mselle, ACABQ)

28. With reference to paragraph 14, the Committee might wish to defer its decision until the report of the Secretary-General had been considered. Paragraph 16 appeared to be inconsistent with paragraph 14 in that the Advisory Committee appeared to be categorical in ruling out exceptions. In fact, that decision should be left to the Fifth Committee. The Advisory Committee had indicated, however, that even if exceptions were granted, no additional resources should be granted at the current stage.

29. Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon), supported by Ms. SINGIRANKABO (Burundi), recommended that the Committee should proceed on the basis of the Secretary-General's recommendations.

30. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation was prepared to proceed on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. Its recommendations were not always in line with the preferences of his delegation, but experience had shown that it was best to follow them in order to maintain confidence in the administrative and financial functioning of the Organization.

31. He drew attention to the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, annex VI, section H, paragraph 13, establishing a deadline of 1 December for the submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions with financial implications and encouraging the practice of accepting the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on expenditures involving small sums. Failure to observe those rules could delay the adoption of important resolutions. Finally, he wondered whether making an appropriation was a guarantee that an activity would be carried out.

32. Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon) recommended that informal consultations should be held on all aspects of document A/47/7/Add.11, although it was regrettable to delay the work of the Committee because of small sums.

33. Mr. LAADJOUZI (Algeria) said that the issue was not the small amounts of money required for those matters, but of coherence in approach and fairness in dealing with issues. His delegation supported the statements by the representatives of Cameroon and Burundi regarding draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.2. It agreed with ACABQ that a contradiction existed between paragraphs 14 and 16 of document A/C.5/47/64, which the Committee should correct. His delegation had followed the debate on the arms register and hoped that the Committee would adopt the same attitude. He agreed that it might be best to discuss the matter in informal consultation.

34. Mr. NA CHAPASSAK (Australia) thanked the Chairman of ACABQ for pointing out the contradiction between paragraphs 14 and 16. Owing to lack of time, the Committee was about to commit an injustice, even though the sums involved were small. He suggested that the Committee should wait for the report and ACABQ recommendations before considering that item.

35. Mr. BIDNYI (Russian Federation) said that his delegation favoured taking a decision based on ACABQ recommendations, on the basis of a consistent line of support to General Assembly subsidiary bodies dealing with administrative and budgetary questions. Although the Committee was dealing with insignificant amounts, it had taken decisions involving millions of dollars, sometimes without sufficient time and attention to their justification. His delegation was prepared to conduct informal consultations on that matter if necessary.

36. The CHAIRMAN said that, since the Committee had not reached consensus, that issue should be discussed in informal consultation.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.14 concerning agenda item 59 (A/C.5/47/65)

37. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, as the approach to item 59 was the same as the one just discussed by the Committee, it should be considered in informal consultations as well.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/SPC/47/L.10 concerning agenda item 76 (A/C.5/47/57)

38. The CHAIRMAN said that he had been informed that ACABQ had no objection to the proposal of the Secretary-General on item 76.

39. Based on the statement of programme budget implications submitted by the Secretary-General and on the recommendations of ACABQ, he proposed that, if the General Assembly adopted draft resolution A/SPC/47/L.10, no additional appropriation would be required under sections 31 and 33 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

40. It was so decided.

41. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of that matter.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/SPC/47/L.7 concerning agenda item 75 (A/C.5/47/60)

42. The CHAIRMAN said that he had been informed that ACABQ had no objection to the Secretary-General's proposal on that matter.

43. Based on the statement of programme budget implications submitted by the Secretary-General and on the recommendations of ACABQ, he proposed that, if the General Assembly adopted draft resolution A/SPC/47/L.7, no additional appropriation would be required at the current stage under sections 2, 31 or 41 of the programme budget for the 1992-1993 biennium.

44. It was so decided.

45. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of that question.

AGENDA ITEM 103: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/47/16, Parts I and II, A/47/358)

AGENDA ITEM 104: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued) (A/C.5/46/56, A/C.5/47/3 and 4)

46. Mr. SPAANS (Chairman, Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that, at the second part of its session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) had considered the budget outline proposed by the Secretary-General. The discussion of that matter could be found in document A/47/16, Part II, beginning with paragraph 203. The Committee usually examined the estimate of resources, priorities, growth and the Contingency Fund. At that session, it had considered an additional item, namely, staff assessment and capital expenditures.

47. With regard to the estimate of resources, CPC had recommended that the General Assembly should consider the preliminary estimate of resources by the Secretary-General as a basis for decision, taking into account a number of specific considerations as discussed in paragraph 220 of its report, dealing mainly with the possible effects of the restructuring of the Secretariat. With regard to priorities, the Committee had noted the proposals of the Secretary-General in paragraphs 10 to 12 of his report (A/47/358) and recommended that they should be considered further by the General Assembly in the light of paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 45/253, which included the overall priorities reflecting broad trends as derived from the mandates of the legislative organs, contained in the introduction to the medium-term plan, as well as the views expressed by Member States thereon and, in particular, in paragraph 5 of resolution 45/255. In paragraph 224, the Committee had noted that the rate of growth was calculated at 0.2 per cent. The Committee had offered conclusions and recommendations with regard to current methodology and the new methodology proposed by the Secretary-General at the invitation of the General Assembly. It had requested further clarification of the method of calculation of real growth, and had endorsed the size of the Contingency Fund. In paragraph 228, CPC had drawn some conclusions and made recommendations with regard to staff assessment and capital expenditure.

48. Mr. BAUDOT (Acting Controller) said that the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 1994-1995 contained in document A/47/358 dealt with one of the essential aspects of the new budgetary process established by General Assembly resolution 41/213. In that part of the process, the recommendations of CPC and ACABQ were of crucial importance to an orderly and informed decision-making process in the Fifth Committee.

(Mr. Baudot)

49. With regard to the recommendations of ACABQ, the recommended reduction of $22.3 million to be applied, if the Fifth Committee agreed, to the original estimate of resources for the biennium 1994-1995 was due to the recommendation that the budgeting upfront of $28 million for future preventive diplomacy and peacemaking activities should not be included in the outline. Therefore, the current procedure for unforeseen and extraordinary expenditures and costs would continue to be used. Another factor was the updating resulting from action taken by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. Fifth Committee decisions in terms of additional requirements for the bienniums had been anticipated in the preparation of the outline, and revisions based on actual decisions could currently be made.

50. He welcomed the recommendation of ACABQ that the methodology of the treatment of estimates for future expenditures such as those for preventive diplomacy and peacemaking should be reviewed.

51. The basic provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213 were of crucial importance, as were efforts to adapt the methods of their implementation. The study requested by ACABQ on the treatment of estimates of that nature was very important.

52. The consequences for the budget outline of Committee decisions could be discussed in informal consultations. For instance, if the Committee postponed its decision on high-level posts and decided to leave in the budget the $4 million related to that item, that would bring about a corresponding increase in the base on which the outline was constructed. The Secretary-General had proposed an indicative estimate implying a 0.2 growth rate using the new methodology of calculation. Obviously, if the ACABQ recommendations were adopted, the rate of growth would be negative. However, technical issues should not be seen as having an effect on the capacity of the Secretariat to implement its mandate.

53. Ms. ERIKSSON FOGH (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the Nordic delegations endorsed the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 1994-1995 (A/47/358), but would have appreciated more substantive background information on the proposed changes. The Nordic delegations could not have a firm position on the overall size of the budget or its real growth rate before being presented with the extrabugetary requirements that were necessary for implementing the mandates of the Organization.

54. In view of the financial constraints facing many countries, it was of the utmost importance that resources should be used as effectively as possible and redeployments made wherever possible. The Nordic delegations would be concerned, however, if restraint in the use of regular budget funds was more than offset by a corresponding growth in extrabudgetary resources. Current total extrabudgetary funds constituted a larger amount than the regular budget; a number of activities that were being financed by extrabudgetary resources should be financed from the regular budget.

(Ms. Eriksson Fogh, Sweden)

55. The issues that were highlighted in the outline were consistent with the priorities set out in the medium-term plan. The Nordic countries were pleased that, in the light of world developments, particular emphasis was given to certain areas within the overall framework of priorities defined in the medium-term plan. They welcomed the reference in chapter III to the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace", and also welcomed the integrated approach between the activities of the United Nations in the political field and those in the field of international cooperation for development. They supported the proposal to increase resources significantly for four areas (para. 12). In that context, they believed that the core activities of the Centre for Human Rights, the Department for Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should to a larger extent be financed from the regular budget. Moreover, environment was one of the five priorities in the medium-term plan and, as a follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, sustainable development should be a key component in the area of international cooperation for development.

56. The Nordic delegations would welcome a continuous review of the level and functioning of the Contingency Fund. The current size of the Fund had met the needs of the Organization; however, its utilization from time to time gave rise to conflicting views in the Committee, where problems of interpretation were encountered.

57. Mr. SPAANS (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that, at its thirty-first session, CPC had recommended a restructuring of the current United Nations budget to render it more transparent and to transform it into a policy document. At its thirty-second session, CPC had examined a prototype of the new budget submitted by the Secretary-General, and it recommended approval of that prototype by the General Assembly. He drew the Committee's attention to the recommendations of CPC in paragraphs 239 to 247 of document A/47/16, Part II, concerning the need for simplicity and readability of the new document, the need to improve the quality of the narrative and the need to rationalize the financial tables.

58. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that it appeared that a wide consensus already existed in favour of a new budget format along the lines which the Secretariat was suggesting. If implemented sensibly and operated, both by Governments and by the Secretariat, in a determination to achieve maximum simplicity, transparency and flexibility, the new proposals would mark a useful first step in improving the United Nations planning and budgeting cycle.

59. The programme budget, despite some weaknesses, was in fairly good shape. Much more drastic work needed to be done on the medium-term plan. The monitoring and evaluation phases were almost totally ineffective. Improving the programme budget format in itself was unlikely to produce marked results overall: efforts needed to be made to simplify the plan narrative, and the

(Mr. Stitt, United Kingdom)

process for its amendment, which should form the basis for future programme budgets. It would also be necessary to link monitoring and evaluation clearly to the major programmes of the plan in a way which would allow it, and subsequently the budget, to be revised substantively on a continuing basis. That should also apply to the elements which were funded by extrabudgetary resources.

60. In implementing the new format, the Secretariat must preserve the distinction between the plan and the budget; the text of the budget should not reproduce the plan narrative either in full or in summary, or reproduce a listing of legislative mandates; that would only divert the attention of Governments from the resource implications to the language in which the programme elements were expressed.

61. The European Community delegations welcomed the proposal to present, in Part I, a more comprehensive overview of the resource allocation proposals in the programme budget, and additional summary and analytical tables. The additional data on extrabudgetary resources and voluntary contributions would be useful in establishing an overall perspective of the resource allocation proposals. In order to be meaningful, however, greater accuracy in estimating extrabudgetary income was extremely important, so as to ensure transparency in the availability and use of those resources. No such resources could be accepted unless the Secretary-General was satisfied that the purpose for which they were intended was consistent with the policies, aims and activities of the United Nations and that the bulk of the money was allocated in accordance with the decisions of other intergovernmental bodies, notably the Governing Council of UNDP. Support cost charges on different types of extrabudgetary income should be levied on a consistent and pragmatic basis, without involving disproportionate administrative effort.

62. The new Part I of the budget document should enable Governments to consider in a more informed way the relative distribution of resources between major programmes and the broad priorities of the Organization. However, in current as well as in real terms, some material covering more than the current biennium might be useful, and also some charts, so that it would be possible to follow the changes in resource allocation over time. A clear presentation of assumptions on both exchange and inflation rates used in the budgeting process was indispensable. Part I should not be a long document; above all, while adding to transparency, the more comprehensive overview should not limit the flexibility which the Secretary-General needed to deploy those resources to the greatest effect.

63. A tendency to excessive verbosity was still displayed in the model text of the prototype in annex I; much of the content of that text would already be in the revised plan text, and much of the rest of the text of the budget sections was repetitive. A key or glossary such as the one in the ICSC report would be extremely useful.

(Mr. Stitt, United Kingdom)

64. The new format offered improvement, but the degree of improvement would depend on the rigour with which the text was edited, and the discipline with which Governments approached its discussion. It could lead to even greater efforts at inappropriate micromanagement.

65. The European Community delegations generally welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals for rationalization and simplification of the programme budget sections. Budget sections did not need to mirror programme divisions, but did need to correspond to them in a readily comprehensible way. There must also be a clear understanding about the allocation of managerial responsibility for programme delivery. Individual managers should know what they were required to deliver, in programme terms, and what resources they had at their disposal, and must be fully accountable for both.

66. With regard to the Secretary-General's proposals, in paragraph 16, to change some aspects of the methodology for calculating resource growth in the budget estimates, a clear explanation was needed as to why the change appeared to result in a 70 per cent reduction in the reported rate of real growth. Careful consideration would also need to be given to the budgetary implications of another proposed "technical" change, namely that provisions for new posts should be made on the basis of full costs (para. 16 (b)).

67. It was important for the credibility of the whole budgetary process that the treatment of inflation and other unavoidable cost changes should be fully transparent and fully justifiable, and that changes proposed for technical reasons did not lead to increased assessment for Member States. Currency fluctuations were a good example; it might be appropriate to consider splitting the assessment levied on Member States between the United States dollar and the Swiss franc as the other major currency of expenditure. The experience of other major organizations of the United Nations system could provide an appropriate model in that regard and offer an enhanced degree of security and predictablility both for the Organization and for Member States.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

68. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the elections of members of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) should be held, as scheduled, on 11 December on the understanding that such action would not constitute a precedent for future occasions.

69. Mr. LAADJOUZI (Algeria), supported by Mr. GABRIEL (Philippines), endorsed the suggestion on that understanding.

70. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh), also supporting the Chairman's suggestion, said that in consequence of the recent withdrawal of the Indian candidature, his delegation had put forward a candidature of its own.

71. Mr. SIKKANDER (Sri Lanka) stated that his delegation had already announced its candidature to the Asian Group and would be notifying the Secretariat shortly.

72. In response to a request by Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada), Ms. ROLLET (Department of Administration and Management) read out articles 3 and 4 of the ICSC statute setting out the rules governing nominations to that body, as well as of of General Assembly resolution 43/226, Part II, paragraph 3, concerning the deadline for the submission of candidatures.

73. The CHAIRMAN said that, owing to the unavoidably late submission of the candidature of Sri Lanka, documents relating to the elections would be available on 11 December in English only. He asked whether the Committee was still prepared to hold the elections on that date, as scheduled, on the understanding previously specified.

74. After further discussion, in which Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda), Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria), Mr. COHEN (United States of America), Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada), Mr. AL ARIMI (Oman) and Mr. MONTHE (Cameroon) took part, the CHAIRMAN explained that in the exceptional circumstances arising from India's withdrawal the procedures required under the ICSC statute could not be completed before the middle of the following week.

75. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that he could not agree to the course of action suggested by the Chairman unless the Secretary-General was in a position to assure the Committee that appropriate consultations with the executive heads of other organizations had been held in accordance with article 4 of the ICSC statute. Appointments to ICSC required the support not only of the Fifth Committee but also of the specialized agencies and other groups.

76. Mr. LAADJOUZI (Algeria) suggested that the elections might be held in two separate stages, the first on 11 December in respect of the candidatures already endorsed, and the second some days late in respect of the vacancy, created by the withdrawal of the Indian candidate, also previously endorsed.

77. After further discussion in which Mr. COHEN (United States of America), Mr. AL ARIMI (Oman), Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh), Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) and Mr. ELZIMAITY (Egypt) took part, the CHAIRMAN suggested that the question of the date of elections to ICSC should be referred to informal consultations.

78. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.